THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) The organised service for the ISM & H Physicians is **yet** to be constituted.

Eradication of Leprosy

† 1527. SHRIMATI SAVITA SHARDA: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are considering seriously to eradicate leprosy;

(b) if so, whether Government would also consider making availability of funds to the States to eradicate this disease;

(c) if so, whether Government are considering to provide financial assistance to the State of Gujarat which is committed to eradicate this disease; and

(d) if so, the quantum of such amount and by when it is likely to be provided and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI A. RAJA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The National Leprosy Eradication Programme is a 100% Centrally Sponsored Scheme. Under this Programme, the States are given cash assistance, free anti Leprosy drugs and funds to the State Leprosy socieities for implementation of Multi Drug Therapy (MDT) services for case detection and free treatment for leprosy patients.

(c) and (d) All the States, including Gujarat, are being financial assistance. The current World Bank project duration is till March, 2004. Funds are released to the States/UTs per their requirements, based on the infrastructure created, patient load and expenditure position of the States /UTs. During the current year, financial assistance to the tune of Rs. 61.97 lakhs, including the cost of drugs, has been released to Gujarat.

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† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.